

# Yemen

## *Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor*

Percent of children 6-14 estimated as working in 2001:	23.7% <sup>4520</sup>
Minimum age of work:	15 <sup>4521</sup>
Age to which education is compulsory:	15 <sup>4522</sup>
Free public education:	Yes <sup>4523</sup>
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2002:	83% <sup>4524</sup>
Net primary enrollment rate in 2002:	72% <sup>4525</sup>
Percent of children 6-14 attending school in 2001:	52.9% <sup>4526</sup>
As of 2001, percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	76% <sup>4527</sup>
Ratified Convention 138:	6/15/00 <sup>4528</sup>
Ratified Convention 182:	6/15/00 <sup>4529</sup>
ILO-IPEC participating country:	Yes <sup>4530</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2001, approximately 27.2 percent of boys and 20.1 percent of girls ages 6 to 14 were working in Yemen.<sup>4531</sup> Children living in rural areas are more likely to work than are children in urban areas.<sup>4532</sup> Eighty-seven percent of child workers are estimated to work in a family enterprise.<sup>4533</sup> The majority of working children work in agricultural sectors, including in the production of *qat* (a mild narcotic found in Yemen).<sup>4534</sup> Children working in agriculture are exposed to hazardous

<sup>4520</sup> UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank Surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, October 7, 2005.

<sup>4521</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Yemen," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61703.htm>.

<sup>4522</sup> Ibid., Section 5.

<sup>4523</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4524</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Gross Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

<sup>4525</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Net Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

<sup>4526</sup> UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank Surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

<sup>4527</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Survival Rate to Grade 5. Total*, accessed December 18, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

<sup>4528</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, accessed October 18, 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

<sup>4529</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, [online database] 2004 [cited March 12, 2004]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

<sup>4530</sup> ILO, *IPEC Action Against Child Labour: Highlights 2006*, Geneva, February 2007; available from <http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/public/english/standards/ipec/doc-view.cfm?id=3159>.

<sup>4531</sup> UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank Surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

<sup>4532</sup> Republic of Yemen, *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP): 2003-2005*, May 31, 2002, 11; available from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/2002/yem/01/053102.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Yemen," Section 6d.

<sup>4533</sup> Understanding Children's Work (UCW), *Understanding Children's Work in Yemen*, prepared by ILO, UNICEF, and World Bank, March 2003, 3; available from [http://www.ucw-project.org/resources/pdf/yemen/Report\\_Yemen\\_draft.pdf](http://www.ucw-project.org/resources/pdf/yemen/Report_Yemen_draft.pdf).

<sup>4534</sup> Republic of Yemen, *PRSP*, 11. See also Understanding Children's Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*, 2. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Third Periodic Reports of States Parties due in 2003: Yemen*,

conditions and activities, including the use of pesticides, prolonged exposure to extreme temperatures, the use of heavy equipment, and carrying heavy loads.<sup>4535</sup> Children also work under hazardous conditions as street vendors, beggars, and domestic servants, as well as in the fishing, leather, construction, textile, and automobile repair sectors.<sup>4536</sup> Street children and children employed in domestic service and restaurants are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.<sup>4537</sup>

Children are trafficked internally for sexual exploitation. Saudi Arabia is the primary destination for children trafficked out of the country, where children between 7 and 16 years are forced to work as street beggars. Children trafficked to Saudi Arabia also work as domestic workers, unskilled laborers, or street vendors.<sup>4538</sup> Reports indicate that these children sell such items as flour and basic commodities, as well as *qat*, which is an illegal substance in Saudi Arabia.<sup>4539</sup> Press reports allege that approximately 200 children are trafficked out of the country per week.<sup>4540</sup> The minimum age for entering military service is 18 years. However, children are allowed to carry weapons<sup>4541</sup> and reportedly participate in ongoing conflicts among tribal groups and in the defense of *qat* fields.<sup>4542</sup>

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CRC/C/129/Add.2, prepared by Government of Yemen, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, December 3, 2004, para 319; available from

[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/55f20ff8a72f20c0c1256f8800329002?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/55f20ff8a72f20c0c1256f8800329002?Opendocument). See also CHF International, *Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services in the Middle East and North Africa (ACCESS-MENA)* project document, Silver Spring, MD, January, 2007, 5, 6.

<sup>4535</sup> Understanding Children's Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*, 2. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Third Periodic Reports of States Parties*, para 319.

<sup>4536</sup> Understanding Children's Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*, 2. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Yemen," Section 6d. See also ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon and Yemen: Consolidating Action against the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, project document, RAB/04/P51/USA, Geneva, September 3, 2004, 32. See also CHF International, *Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services in the Middle East and North Africa (ACCESS-MENA)* 5, 6.

<sup>4537</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Yemen*, CRC/C/15/Add.267, prepared by Government of Yemen, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, September 21, 2005; available from

[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/1296a4127ff7b38ac1257018002e6633?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/1296a4127ff7b38ac1257018002e6633?Opendocument). See also Understanding Children's Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*, 2.

<sup>4538</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Yemen (Tier 2 Watch List)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006*, Washington, DC, June 5, 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65987.htm>. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Yemen," Section 5.

<sup>4539</sup> Joseph Rispoli, *Feasibility Study on Recovery and Reintegration Schemes for Children Victims of Trafficking: Case Studies of Hajja, Hodeida, and Al Mahweet Governorates*, December 2006; available from [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/projects/showcase\\_pdf/ye20061219\\_rep.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/projects/showcase_pdf/ye20061219_rep.pdf). See also Paul Garwood, "Yemen Steps up Fight vs. Child Smuggling," *Associated Press* (Seattle), October 29, 2005; available from [http://www.childtrafficking.org/cgi-bin/ct/main.sql?ID=2117&file=view\\_news.sql&TITLE=-1&TOPIC=-1&YEAR=-1&LISTA=No&GEOG=545&FULL\\_DETAIL=Yes](http://www.childtrafficking.org/cgi-bin/ct/main.sql?ID=2117&file=view_news.sql&TITLE=-1&TOPIC=-1&YEAR=-1&LISTA=No&GEOG=545&FULL_DETAIL=Yes).

<sup>4540</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Yemen," Section 5.

<sup>4541</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports of States Parties (Continued): Third Periodic Report of Yemen*, CRC/C/SR.1049, prepared by Government of Yemen, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, June 1, 2005, para 41; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/43ba7a8950f906ecc125708400311306?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/43ba7a8950f906ecc125708400311306?Opendocument).

<sup>4542</sup> Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Yemen," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, 2004; available from [http://www.child-soldiers.org/document\\_get.php?id=956](http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=956). See also Understanding Children's Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*, 2.

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law sets the minimum working age at 15 years for the private sector and at 18 years for the public sector.<sup>4543</sup> Children between 12 and 15 years may work by special permit.<sup>4544</sup> The law prohibits all types of exploitation of children, as well as hazardous or socially damaging working conditions. Moreover, employers must grant every youth a 30-day annual leave for every 12-month period of labor completed. Neither the child nor the parent may waive this annual leave. Further, employers are required to pay young persons not less than two-thirds of the minimum wage provided to an adult for the specific occupation performed. Payments must be made directly to the child. The child labor provisions do not apply to young persons working under the supervision of a guardian if the work is performed under suitable health and social conditions.<sup>4545</sup> Penalties for non-compliance with child labor laws include fines and up to 3 months of imprisonment.<sup>4546</sup>

Forced or compulsory labor is prohibited, including that performed by children.<sup>4547</sup> Children under 18 are prohibited from entering the government armed forces.<sup>4548</sup> Although Yemeni law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons, there are provisions in the Penal Code to prosecute and punish traffickers.<sup>4549</sup> The law stipulates a prison sentence of 10 years for “anyone who buys, sells, or gives as a present, or deals in human beings; and anyone who brings into the country or exports from it a human being with the intent of taking advantage of him.” If the offense is committed against a child, the prison term can be extended to 15 years. Kidnapping is punishable by up to 7 years in prison; kidnapping cases involving sexual assault or murder are punishable by the death penalty.<sup>4550</sup>

The Ministry of Labor’s Child Labor Unit is responsible for enforcing child labor laws, but according to the U.S. Department of State, because of a lack of resources, the government’s enforcement of these provisions is limited, especially in rural and remote areas.<sup>4551</sup> Prostitution laws have been used to detain and prosecute child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>4552</sup> The government increased the number of convictions for child trafficking in 2005, the most recent date such information is available, from 2 successful convictions from April 2004 to

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<sup>4543</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2006: Yemen,” Section 6d.

<sup>4544</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4545</sup> *Labor Code, Act No. 5 of 1995*, (1995), Articles 49-53; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/txt/E95YEM01.htm>.

<sup>4546</sup> Understanding Children’s Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*, 31.

<sup>4547</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2006: Yemen,” Section 6c.

<sup>4548</sup> Understanding Children’s Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*, 2. See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, “Global Report 2004.”

<sup>4549</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Yemen.” See also U.S. Embassy- Sana’a, *reporting, March 15, 2005*.

<sup>4550</sup> U.S. Embassy- Sana’a, *reporting, March 15, 2005*.

<sup>4551</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Country Reports- 2006: Yemen,” Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Sana’a, *reporting, August 23, 2004*. See also Understanding Children’s Work (UCW), *UCW in Yemen*.

<sup>4552</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Yemen.”

March 2005 to 19 convictions from April 2005 to March 2006.<sup>4553</sup> The arrests were attributed to an increase in patrolling on the Saudi Arabian border.<sup>4554</sup>

## **Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

The Government of Yemen is implementing policies to curb child labor as outlined in the National Strategy to Combat Child Labor.<sup>4555</sup> The Ministry of Youth & Sports' National Strategy for Integrating Youth into Development includes strategic actions to combat child labor, such as advocating for the enforcement of laws and legislation that prohibit child labor, and working against any exploitation of young people.<sup>4556</sup> The Ministry of Human Rights operates a hotline to receive complaints concerning the exploitation, trafficking, and sexual or other abuse of children;<sup>4557</sup> it has also circulated information on the hotline in areas where child trafficking is prevalent.<sup>4558</sup> In August 2006, the government presented the Third Five-Year Plan for Socioeconomic Development (2006-2010) that includes a chapter directly addressing child labor through the Childhood and Youth Strategy.<sup>4559</sup>

The Government of Yemen is participating in a USDOL-funded USD 3 million regional project implemented by ILO-IPEC that aims to promote the collection and analysis of child labor information; to strengthen enforcement and monitoring mechanisms; to build capacity; to raise awareness of the negative consequences of child labor; and to withdraw 3,400 and prevent 3,500 children from engaging in the worst forms of child labor.<sup>4560</sup> The government is also participating in a USD 8 million sub-regional project funded by USDOL and implemented by CHF International to combat child labor through education in Lebanon and Yemen. The project aims to withdraw 4,305 children and prevent 3,195 children from entering exploitive labor.<sup>4561</sup>

The Government of Yemen is increasing its efforts to combat trafficking in children.<sup>4562</sup> Yemeni and Saudi officials met to discuss combating child trafficking for the first time in June 2006. Border and airport officials were trained to identify and prevent child trafficking by the government in cooperation with UNICEF and the IOM.<sup>4563</sup> The government is also conducting an information campaign to raise awareness among parents and community leaders about the dangers of child trafficking, and it is operating a hotline to report child trafficking.<sup>4564</sup> The

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<sup>4553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4554</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Yemen," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2005*, Washington, DC, March 8, 2006, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61703.htm>.

<sup>4555</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Third Periodic Reports of States Parties*, para 8.

<sup>4556</sup> Ministry of Youth and Sport Republic of Yemen, *The National Strategy for Integrating Youth Into Development, Second Edition*, 2002, 20.

<sup>4557</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports*, para 56.

<sup>4558</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Yemen."

<sup>4559</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon and Yemen*, technical progress report, RAB/04/P51/USA, September 2006, 3, 4.

<sup>4560</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the National Policy and Programme Framework*, project document, 28, 35-38, 49.

<sup>4561</sup> CHF International, *Alternatives to Combat Child Labor through Education and Sustainable Services in the Middle East and North Africa (ACCESS-MENA)* cover page, 12.

<sup>4562</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports*, para 22. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Yemen," Section 5.

<sup>4563</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Yemen," Section 5.

<sup>4564</sup> Ibid. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Yemen."

Yemeni Government, in cooperation with UNICEF and ILO-IPEC, opened a reception center at the Haradh border with Saudi Arabia to receive, rehabilitate, and educate repatriated child trafficking victims, which received more than 300 children during its first 6 months.<sup>4565</sup>

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<sup>4565</sup> UN Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography: Addendum*, E/CN.4/2006/67/Add.1, prepared by Government of Yemen, pursuant to Sixty-second session, March 2006.